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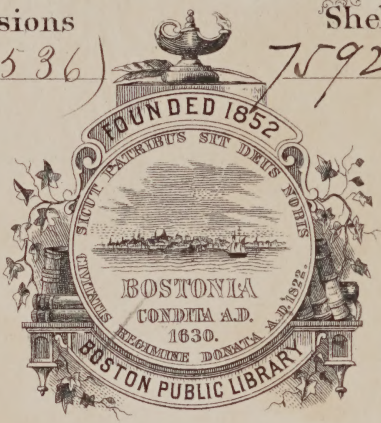

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The Organic Development of Christianity in the Direction of Education and Learning.

AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED IN BOSTON, MAY 30, 1860,

BEFORE THE

Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West.

BY REV. J. W. WELLMAN.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.
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"At a public meeting of The Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, on Wednesday, May 30, 1860, in Central Church, Winter Street, Boston, William Ropes, Esq., one of the Directors, presided. Rev. Prof. Joseph Emerson, of Beloit College, Wisconsin, offered Prayer, and the Annual Address was delivered by Rev. J. W. Wellman, of Newton, Mass."

ADDRESS.

It is the fine remark of Lord Bacon, discoursing on the "Defects of Universities," that "if you will have a tree bear more fruit than it hath used to do, it is not any thing that you can do to the boughs, but it is the stirring of the earth, and putting new mould about the roots, that must work it." It will be generally conceded, that the roots of our educational institutions are imbedded in the Christianity of our country. And yet, such a rhetorical figure will be understood as illustrating the *fact*, rather than the *nature*, of the relation of Religion to Learning. It is still an open question, What is the kind of connection that subsists between them? Is it organic, or mechanical? Are our educational institutions a natural product, as an arbitrary gift, of Christianity? Have they come to us in a merely accidental connection with our Puritan faith, or are they the result of a grand historic process, the last fruit of a great organic development which has been going on through all the Christian centuries?

It will doubtless commend itself to every one as a just statement, that our present system of public schools would have been as anomalous, indeed as impossible, in the days of Christ, as a garden of flowers on the sands of Sahara; that a New England college, in the time of Paul, would have been as much of a miracle, as a full-blown rose flinging its fragrance upon the air around it, which yet never hung upon any stem or stock. And yet, may not these schools and colleges have existed potentially in Christianity at the start? May not this great change, that has taken place in the manner and facilities of education, be only the natural unfolding of Christianity in

the direction of intellectual culture, so that our present educational institutions are the bud and bloom, not of a century-plant, but of a tree which must have grown through all the past Christian centuries, ere it could bless the world with these singularly beautiful and fragrant blossoms?

I propose to answer this question in the affirmative; and to advocate the view, as animating as it is sublime, if it is the true view, that the relation of Christianity to education and learning is organic or vital, not artificial or accidental; that our educational system and institutions are the result of a growth or evolution which has been going on through all the Christian era; that Christianity, by the designed working of its two vital forces, the Word and the Spirit, has ever developed itself in the direction of culture; not uniformly, of course, in all ages and countries, not continuously in every place, not in a straight, unbroken line, perhaps, any where, but rather by constant reproduction, just as the fruit-tree of the same species, wherever you plant it, always puts forth the same leaf and flower, and bears the same fruit; and not only this, but also that these intellectual developments—looking at them not so much in single places as in the world, not in the comparison of brief but of long intervals of time—have grown even fairer, richer and more abundant among the nations, giving us in this an earnest of that promised time, when knowledge, as well as holiness, shall fill the earth.

The theme, then, upon which I beg leave to say a few words at this hour, is, *The organic development of Christianity in the direction of education and learning.*

And first, it is a familiar fact, that Christianity, through the new birth which it gives, directs and intensifies the intellectual life of man. The originating power in this growth or evolution, of which I speak, is supernatural. The vital forces are the Word and the Spirit, and they, in their influence upon the soul, "are spirit and they are life." Christianity, through these living and life-giving forces, is a stimulus to mind. It creates in the soul a craving for high intellectual, as well as for high moral, attainments. It awakens, for instance, a sense of liberty under God, which requires for its right exercise the highest intelligence. It gives a clear consciousness of personal accountability to the

Most High, which demands, in view of a coming reckoning, the best possible equipment of discipline and knowledge, in order to meet properly the obligations incident to such a lofty stewardship. The imperative voice of Christianity, to those who embrace it, has ever been, "In understanding be *men.*" But manhood is not the attainment of a day. It comes only by growth; by a process of gradual evolution, like the slow and silent organic processes which we behold in the vegetable kingdom. And thus we have, in the individual man, what may properly be called an intellectual *development*,—one, nevertheless, the originating or life-giving power in which is supernatural. Jesus himself grew in wisdom. And in the free and perfect unfolding of his intellectual life, he is the type of what is proximately accomplished in all those who are born of the Spirit into his kingdom. And Christianity, thus working in the individual mind, through that works in society. Producing an intellectual development in the individual members of the community, through them it produces a corresponding development in the world, manifesting itself in systems of education, in institutions of learning, in art and science, and in all the varied aids and instruments of a rapidly advancing civilization.

Again, looking at Christianity in its actual history, we find *in its very origin and ground-work* an obvious preparation for a grand unfolding of itself in the direction of education and learning. Christ's coming as a great *Teacher*, "the light of the world;" his creating at once the college of the Apostles, with the design that they should be fitted to teach others, that their pupils in turn might be qualified to instruct still others, and that this process should go on until the whole world should be enlightened with the light of true knowledge; when he ascended, his leaving, as the chief and permanent forces in Christianity, those two great, supernatural illuminators, the Word and the Spirit; that temporary but wonderfully prophetic provision, the endowment of the early Christians with miraculous intellectual gifts, designed to take the place of the knowledge and culture, and the facilities for knowledge and culture, such as schools and libraries, which, on account of their nature and the laws of mind, Christianity had not as yet had time to produce, by the process of normal development,—all these things, and

such as these, unmistakably indicate that Christianity was designed to be the great educator of the world.

Again, we observe, as a fact of history, that Christianity, at the outset, manifested a natural affinity for all true learning and culture, for every form of truth and beauty. It did not come to the world like a tornado, sweeping away, in blind and remorseless fury, the art and science, and all the intellectual acquisitions of past ages. It came rather like a living germ, and, planting itself in the midst of the Hebrew and the highest Pagan civilization, in the midst of a vast amount of fragmentary and chaotic learning, in the midst of decaying nationalities, governments and religions, it began at once a strictly organic work, disintegrating the various elements around it, as a plant does the atmosphere, fluids and earths, appropriating to itself all true discipline and culture, receiving as the aliment of its own life the true and the good, and rejecting the false and the bad; and so unfolding itself from within, and bursting up through all the incrustations of superstition and tyranny, false philosophies and false religions, there stood forth at length, in vast and expanding proportions, a true Christian learning, accompanied and aided by a rapidly advancing Christian literature and by flourishing Christian institutions of learning. Christianity had no disposition to make a clean sweep of the ancient culture. It did not come to the world with the spirit of the Goths and Vandals, despoiling, with barbaric rudeness, the beautiful and venerated products of art and science. It came with a singularly refined and just taste, a more than human culture, a spirit to appreciate all beauty in nature and in art, and all truth in philosophy and science. Wherever it went, it imparted to the human mind great powers of discrimination. It began to exhibit every thing in its right place and proportions. It exalted the beauty of holiness above all other beauty. It made the truths of Revelation paramount, and the standard and test for all other truth.

The capacious mind of Paul had doubtless treasured vast stores of Pagan and Rabbinical learning. But the moment he became a Christian, a disintegrating process commenced. He began to discriminate between the true and the false, between the excellent and the worthless. It is easy to imagine how some single truths of the gospel, acting like

the morning sun upon the mists of the night, would clear away a thousand false conceptions that beclouded his mind. The doctrine of the resurrection, for example, rising clearly upon his vision, may have dissipated a vast amount of mythological and traditional learning upon the subject of man's transition from the present to the future state. The doctrine of justification by faith, in the same manner, may have swept away many vague and erroneous conceptions respecting the nature of sin, the character and destiny of man, the government and character of God. Correct views upon these subjects must have gradually corrected his views upon other subjects. Thus the light must have advanced farther and farther into the darkness, ever opening new fields of truth to his enlarged and enraptured mind. This great intellectual movement taking place in individual minds, must have produced a corresponding movement in the world, manifesting itself, to a very great extent, in the character and institutions of society.

Observe, in the next place, some historical facts which disclose the actual progress of this intellectual development in the world, during the first Christian centuries.

Immediately after inspiration and other miraculous gifts had ceased, there was a great change in the degree of culture and knowledge prevalent among Christians. The intellectual character of the church fell. The next two generations of Christians, taken as they were, in a great measure, from Pagan nations, and usually from the lowest classes in Pagan nations, were an exceedingly simple-minded people. And yet the distance through which the church fell, intellectually, at this point, was not so great as the distance through which it rose immediately after the ascension of Christ; so that, on the whole, there was plainly an advance. No one, in reading the New Testament, can pass from the Evangelists to the Book of the Acts and to the Epistles, without marking the great change which took place in the intellectual character of the disciples, at or near the time of the Pentecostal baptism. Before this, they were only children in understanding; afterwards, they were men. It is not surprising, however, that when that supernatural process of enlightenment ceased, there was apparently a great change. The Apostolic Fathers, as they are

called, it has been justly said, "seem like grown-up children." And yet such men as Clement, and Ignatius, and Polycarp, judged simply by their writings, must have been, in mental culture, far in advance of the fishermen of Galilee, while passing through the three or four years of their pupilage, under the personal instruction of Christ.

But leaving the Apostolic Fathers, and coming down the successive generations of Christians, we observe a constant and rapid advance in knowledge and general culture. As early as the middle of the second century, and according to some authorities earlier still, schools were very generally established throughout Christendom, for the instruction of children and youth. At the same time, great scholars appeared here and there, and various places began to be distinguished as seats of Christian learning and literature. As early as the first part of the third century, we find the north of Africa, under the influence of Christianity, lit up with an intellectual splendor, which ever since has been regarded as the marvel of that age. Alexandria, at that time, had become famous for her school and her scholars, her Clement and Origen; and Carthage had become the chief seat of the Latin theology, the home of Cyprian and Tertullian. A high degree of intellectual life seems to have pervaded all classes. Three years of catechetical instruction were required as a necessary preparation for admission to a Christian church.

Very early, too, in other parts of the world, schools of theology began to flourish, as at Antioch and Edessa. But perhaps the most interesting and promising feature in this great intellectual movement in the West was, that it every where pervaded the masses of the people. As the gospel is not for the few only, but for all, so the intellectual life it awakened was not confined to a few superior minds, but was general. Celsus, who was the first writer against Christianity, and who scoffed at the new religion because it made so few converts from the great and the learned, and so many from the low and the ignorant, yet unconsciously paid a fine compliment to the combined Christian modesty and intellectual vigor of those same low and ignorant Christians. "You shall see," he says, "weavers, taylors, fullers, and the most rustic and illiterate fellows, who when at home, and when before their elders and

betters, are as mute as fishes; but when they can get a few children and silly women by themselves, then who so wise and learned, who so full of talk, and so able to teach and instruct as they!" This testimony, from an enemy of Christianity, is exceedingly significant. *Children*, he tells us, were gathered together, in that early age, and taught by Christians. *Women*, too, not simply men, but women—an unheard-of thing, it would seem, at that time in the world—were not deemed unworthy of intellectual elevation. Even *they*, he tells us with a sneer, shared those humble educational privileges which he describes as having spontaneously sprung up among the people. Indeed the whole picture which he draws, of discussions going on, of instruction imparted and received, of a general intellectual ferment, among even the lowest classes of the people, reaching both sexes, and the youngest as well as the oldest, is strikingly illustrative of the fact, that a great educational movement was going on in the world under the influence of Christianity. Arius and Athanasius were not the only men, in the fourth century, who were able to discuss abstruse questions in theology. Said Gregory, of Nyssa, in his discourse on the divinity of the Son and the Spirit, speaking of the people of Constantinople, "Every corner and nook of the city is full of men who discuss incomprehensible subjects; the streets, the markets, the people who sell old clothes, those who sit at the tables of the money-changers, those who deal in provisions. Ask a man how many oboli it comes to, he gives you a specimen of dogmatizing on generated and ungenerated being. Inquire the price of bread, you are answered, 'The Father is greater than the Son, and the Son subordinate to the Father.' Ask if the bath is ready, and you are answered, 'The Son of God was created from nothing.'" And at the same time that this intellectual ferment was going on among the masses of the people, great scholars were shaking the world with their discussions, and various places, both in the East and in the West, were becoming renowned for their schools of theology and general learning.

And thus, during the first Christian centuries, there was a rapid and grand development of Christianity in the direction of education and learning; a development, which reached its culmination in the fourth and fifth centuries, creating that

age of intellectual splendor, when, all around the shores of the Mediterranean, the commonest artisans discussed, in their shops, the profoundest questions in theology; when Christian mothers, in many lands, prayerfully taught their sons the great truths of Revelation; when the children of Christians were every where gathered into schools; when Alexandria and Antioch had become great seats of Christian learning, and Edessa, "the Athens of Syria;" when Athanasius stood forth the peerless theologian, and the golden-mouthed Chrysostom the unrivaled orator of the world; and when Ambrose and Augustine thought and wrote for all succeeding ages.

But all this intellectual splendor waned, and went out. The internal corruption of the churches and the sword of the Saracen arrested this magnificent growth, and left Christianity to reproduce it in other climes and ages.

I pass, in the next place, to the intellectual development of Christianity in the West, immediately before and during the Middle Ages.

We find Christianity here in very different circumstances, and with very different material to work upon and with; and I propose to show how the tree, although planted in a different soil and clime, yet at length bore the same fruit,—the same in kind, but far richer and more abundant.

Christianity in the West found itself among the wild barbarian hordes who peopled northern Europe, and who, pouring southward, had planted themselves upon the ruins of the Roman Empire. There was no old civilization, no Grecian and Roman culture to be appropriated, no "wild olive branch" to be "grafted in." Every thing must be created anew, language, literature, institutions of learning. The wondrous forces of the gospel here plunged into the old night of heathenism, and set to work, and for centuries they seemed well nigh lost in the darkness. Their progress was laborious, often imperceptible. Christianity entering the heart of a Saul of Tarsus, and appropriating his fine intellectual discipline and massive learning, and then taking him on to a yet higher culture and knowledge, must exhibit a result very different from that presented when it enters the heart of a wild savage of Normandy or Burgundy, and begins the work of his intellectual development; and yet

the tendency and power of Christianity in this direction, may, in the end, be more clearly illustrated in the latter than in the former. Christianity planting itself among the scholars of Alexandria, and in a few years making that place the most celebrated seat of learning in the world, exhibits, in its immediate results, a spectacle very different from that presented when it plants itself among a few untutored Gauls, in the wild forests on the banks of the Seine ; but when, after many centuries of slow progress, we behold, as the result, the great University of Paris, with its thirty thousand students, we say that the tendency and power of Christianity to unfold itself in the direction of education and learning, are more grandly illustrated in the latter instance than in the former.

The power of Christianity in the West, through the Middle Ages, was, moreover, greatly weakened by internal corruption, and especially by a false church organization. There had gradually grown up an enormous ecclesiastical centralization, which sought to repress all spontaneous and independent developments of Christianity. Having its centre at Rome, and reaching, with the iron grasp of its power, every part of Christendom, it rendered an easy and natural expansion of Christianity, like that of the first centuries, impossible. Centralization is an attempt to produce expansion inward. It is, in the church, what selfishness is in the heart. It makes something this side of Christ the centre and head of the kingdom. Its result is stagnation and death. It made the church of the Middle Ages a mummy. It wrapt it all round and round with every conceivable invention which could repress its natural life and growth. And those ages are called "*The Dark Ages.*"

And yet, notwithstanding all these and other repressing and corrupting influences, Christianity lived. The Word and the Spirit still wrought, and wherever they wrought we can detect some movement in the direction of education and learning. Many of these intellectual movements, it is true, were necessarily abnormal. Schools were formed mainly in connection with monasteries and cathedrals. Learning, in those untoward times, hid itself behind iron bars and castle walls. It was cloister learning, narrow, sentimental, mystical, often worthless. It was feeble and sickly, like the vegetation that grows in dark, damp cellars. And yet, for all this, it illustrates

the intellectual vitality of Christianity none the less, but all the more clearly. For nearly all the *piety* of the times was in these same monasteries. The clergy were exceedingly corrupt. The schools were mainly in the hands of the monks, and of a few of the more pious bishops, and were the fruit of the purest Christianity of those ages.

The monasteries, moreover, were the repositories of the ancient learning, and of the works of the Christian Fathers. They frequently gathered large libraries. In some of them a prodigious amount of labor was expended in multiplying copies of ancient works. Hundreds of monks in the same room toiled at their desks, without a word or a whisper, month after month and year after year, transcribing the Bible, and the works of the Christian Fathers, and the Greek and Roman classics. The monastery was the cumbrous printing-press of the Middle Ages; and it accomplished a noble work, not in diffusing knowledge among the millions of those ages, but in transmitting the treasures of ancient learning, and the writings of the first Christian centuries, down to the inventive genius of the fifteenth century, which in turn has given them to the entire world. Here, as in many other instances, we find a little rill, away back in a remote century, bursting out of the very heart of Christianity, and we trace it down the ages, until it becomes a great river, and finally, in our times, expands into a world-wide ocean.

But the most beautiful intellectual developments of Christianity in the Middle Ages, and those which most strikingly illustrate its organic educational power, occurred far away from the great centres of ecclesiastical tyranny and corruption. Oftentimes on islands of the sea, up among the free peasantry of the mountains, and along the extreme borders of Europe, far away from Rome, in places where the people knew little and cared less about popes and cardinals and bishops, some truth of the gospel would find its way to a human heart, and fill it with the love of Jesus, and then, in that single instance, there would be a free and natural unfolding of Christianity, making the very wilderness bud and blossom like the rose, until Rome heard of it, and Romish tyranny and corruption reached it, and then all this beauty would wither and die.

Let me give two or three examples. About the middle of

the fifth century, a slave boy—his name was Patricius—while tending the flocks of his barbarian master among the hills of Ireland, gave his heart and life to Christ. He was a British boy, and had been taken captive by a band of pirates. Very early in the Christian era, the gospel had been preached in Britain, and churches had been established, probably, by missionaries not from Rome, but directly from the East. These churches continued through the first centuries. The father of Patricius belonged to one of them, was a devoted Christian, and faithfully instructed his boy in the truths of the gospel. But Patricius cared little for these things, until he was taken by the pirates and sold to savages. And then, as his employment compelled him to be, much of the time, alone in the mountains, abandoned of all human aid, he began to look to God for help, and to find his chief delight in prayer and in thoughts of Jesus. "I was sixteen years old," he says, "and I knew not the true God; but, in a strange land, the Lord brought me to a sense of my unbelief, so that, although late, I minded me of my sins, and turned with my whole heart to the Lord my God; who looked down on my loneliness, had pity on my youth and my ignorance, who preserved me ere I knew him, and who protected and comforted me, as a father does his son, ere I knew how to distinguish between good and evil."

After six years of slavery, he escaped from the savages and reached his friends. But he immediately began to feel "an irrepressible desire to carry the blessings of the gospel to those Pagans with whom he had spent a great part of his youth." He thought about it by day, and dreamed about it by night. The love of Christ wrought in him precisely as it did in Samuel J. Mills, nearly fourteen centuries later. He finally repaired to France, to obtain some little instruction from pious monks and clergymen, preparatory to his missionary labors; and then, against the earnest remonstrance of his friends, who feared for his life, went to bear the blessings of the gospel to the savage tribes of Ireland. Perfectly familiar with their language and their customs, he assembled the people around him, in the open fields, at the beat of the drum, and told them the story of Jesus. His preaching was blessed. The heathen embraced the gospel. And Patricius, under this free working of the love of Christ, although comparatively ignorant himself,

immediately organized schools for the instruction of the people, and especially to train up native teachers and preachers. And, strange to say, these same schools speedily became the highest and most flourishing institutions of learning in those times; and during all the dark ages they were, to benighted Europe, like a bright, ever-burning fire away on the distant horizon. For centuries, they were nearly the only visible source of intellectual light and life. They were constantly pouring forth teachers and preachers into every part of the Western world. In a similar manner, out of a comparatively free and unfettered Christianity, schools sprang up, a century later, in Scotland. A missionary from Ireland even founded a monastery on one of the islands of the Hebrides, which, in thirty years, attained the highest reputation as an institution of learning. Thus, while the enormous centralization of the Romish church was resting like an iceberg upon nearly all the Christianity of the world, away on this extreme border of Europe, the only place where Christianity was free, it was unfolding itself naturally, according to its own laws, fresh and beautiful, like the bursting flowers and the living green that fringe an Alpine glacier.

In the last part of the sixth century, a young man, born in Ireland and educated in her schools—Columban by name—felt the fire of Christian love burning in his heart, and began to look around for some field of missionary labor. Finally, with a few companions, he passed over to the continent, went to the country of the wild Burgundians, and began to tell them of Christ. His preaching was successful; and here, too, measures were immediately taken to provide teachers and to educate the people. And in the midst of this free and flourishing development of Christianity, the greatest opposition, which Colomban met with, was from the powers of Rome. He manfully asserted his independence, but the powerful Papacy snatched from his hand the fruit of all his toil, and he was, at last, obliged to beg the privilege of living silently in the forests, by the side of the bones of seventeen of his missionary companions who had fallen in the midst of their arduous labors for Christ.

In the last part of the seventh century, and in the first part of the eighth, several young Englishmen, of devoted piety, most

of whom had received their education in the schools of Ireland, went as missionaries to the untutored tribes of Germany. The name of the most noted of these was Boniface. So successful were his labors, that, within a period of fifteen years, he had "organized churches among a hundred thousand Germans, and erected numerous church edifices and monasteries, where before was an unbroken wilderness." And here likewise abundant provision was made for the education of the people. Thus out of a living and comparatively free Christianity, came the first schools of Germany. Boniface came very near asserting his entire independence of Rome. It is a remarkable fact, that the first missionaries to Germany were upon the point of doing precisely what Luther and his companions did seven centuries later. The seeds of the great Reformation were planted in those first Christian missions; and they never died. They were unfolding through all the intervening centuries. The harvest came at last.

Time fails me to give other illustrations. But nearly all the movements of Christianity in the direction of learning, during the Dark Ages, came, not from Rome, not from the church, but from individual men, far away from Rome, whose hearts burned with the love of Christ. The missionary movements of the Papacy, in those ages, were carried on in the spirit of the crusades. The heathen were to be christianized by the pomp of bishops and the march of armies. The establishment of schools for the intellectual elevation of savages and infidels, was a thing not thought of. When bishop Otto, for instance, at the beginning of the twelfth century, would christianize the barbarians of Pomerania, he marched into their territory in great state, all his robes on and crozier in hand, at the head of a long retinue of attendants and wagons, and a company of soldiers; and the overawed heathen were immediately baptized by hundreds, surrounded by the soldiers. When in a few days, he had thus christianized one village, he marched to another; and thence to another.

Similar in spirit were the missions in the Middle Ages to Tartary and China. We do not call these Christian missions. Their object was not to christianize, in our sense of the term, but to subdue the heathen and compel them to acknowledge the church. There was, of course, no unfolding of Christian-

ity in such cases, and the missions ceased as soon as the sword and the crozier were gone. It is a fact exceedingly pertinent to our subject, that in all those missions in the Middle Ages, so far as I am acquainted with them, which were prompted, not by the love of Christ, but by a spirit of Papal propagandism, there was no progress whatever in the direction of education and learning.

I have now spoken of the cloister learning of the Middle Ages as springing from Christianity, under the repressing influences of a false and corrupt church system; and also of the isolated or sporadic educational movements which sprang fresh and free from the earnest piety of individual men, most of whom were comparatively removed from the crushing and corrupting influences of ecclesiastical centralization.

But there were, during these ages, several other lines of development in the same direction, one of which I must not omit to notice. I have already said that Christianity, at the very opening of the Christian era, found its way to Britain; that, as a consequence, in the middle of the fifth century, it entered the heart of an ardent British youth, and, unrepressed and uncorrupted, grew and unfolded itself there as spontaneously and as beautifully as the flowers on his native hills; and that the sequel of this was a mission to Ireland, and the founding of those schools which, for many centuries, were the most flourishing institutions of theological and general learning in all Europe. These, and similar institutions in Scotland, exerted a powerful influence upon England. They constantly supplied her with scholars and teachers, and enriched her with literature and science; and the enthusiasm in letters thus awakened, led to the procuring of books from the dusty libraries of Rome and Gaul.

While this natural educational development was still going on in the seventh century, a bishop elect, who had been sent to Rome for ordination as primate of England, died by the way. The pope took it upon himself to send back in his place one Theodore of Tarsus, a man of ability and learning. But fearing to trust a man educated in the oriental church, among the intelligent and independent Englishmen, the pope sent back with him an Italian abbot, as a kind of overseer or spy. Fortunately, however, Theodore favored the scholars and the

learning of England, and not only that, but with his Italian companion traveled through the country, made arrangements for the establishment of schools, and greatly encouraged the already growing culture of the people. Under these influences a large class of educated men began to come upon the stage of action, and among them was the venerable Bede, who has been deservedly called, "The teacher of England." Bede was the instructor of Alcuin, who in his turn became the great teacher of his times. Alcuin, on account of the celebrity of his scholarship, was called to France, and became the teacher of the Emperor Charlemagne, and Charlemagne became the greatest patron of learning in his age, established schools throughout his empire, and laid the foundations of the Universities of Paris, Pavia and Bologna.

In a similar manner, Alfred of England, a century later, or at the close of the ninth century, taught by the scholars of his country, and thus imbued with a love of learning, became the patron of letters. In these two instances we see the learning, that sprang centuries before from the ardent piety of individual men, finally enthrone itself in the highest seats of national power. This was something new. It was Christian learning, for the first time, subduing and appropriating for its own more rapid progress, the power of the state. It was an advance beyond even the educational triumphs of the primitive Christianity. It was an earnest of what would be achieved, in this direction, in coming ages, when pure Christianity should obtain a more perfect and universal triumph. It was a faint betokening of that yet farther and brighter hereafter, when the kingdom of Christ shall subdue all things unto itself.

But the fullness of time had not yet come. The revival of letters, in the times of Charlemagne and Alfred, was like the too early bursting of the spring buds. The Dark Ages were the Winter of Christianity. Its progress, during this period, was not, in any great degree, external and demonstrative. The organic processes that were going on, were for the most part hidden and silent. Much of the learning, as we have seen, was cloister learning. Other educational movements rose far away on the lonely borders of Europe. Twice only did they reach, in any marked degree, the great centres of national power, and then only to be driven back immediately, in the

one case by the devastation of war, and in the other by an unfavorable civil government.

But the Spring time was coming. All these under-ground and silent educational processes were not in vain. These long lines of separate development at last met, united their forces, and burst upon the world in that great revival of learning which occurred in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; when the far-famed scholastic theology reached its dizzy height; when a score, more or less, of universities were founded in Europe every century, and schools without number; when there were ten thousand law students gathered at Bologna, and thirty thousand students at Paris, and thirty thousand at Oxford; when the literature of the East, which had been brought to the West by the Crusaders, and imported by the Arabs through Spain, was ransacked and studied as never before, by thousands of eager scholars, and the works of the Christian Fathers, and the Greek and Roman classics were made as familiar as household words; and when great men, as Anselm, Abelard, and Thomas Aquinas, thought and wrote for all the coming ages.

Christianity here, at last reached a height of development in education and learning corresponding to that which it reached in the East in the fourth and fifth centuries. It was longer about it than in the first instance; for it had different material to work with. It found nothing here, in the way of letters and culture, made to its hand. It had to create every thing. It had to transfer all the ancient learning into several barbarian languages. It had to create a new literature, new institutions, and a new culture throughout. And yet, in spite of all this and other hinderances, it triumphed at last, and not only that, but it reached, in this case, a higher and more perfect stage of intellectual development, than in the fourth and fifth centuries. And I submit, from what has been said, even, that in all this long and mighty development, the grand, vital force has been the Word and the Spirit, a living Christianity unfolding itself in this direction, as well as in others, according to its own inherent laws.

The great revival of learning of which I have spoken, which occurred in the centuries immediately preceding the Reformation, did not by any means remove the difficulties in

the way of a free and normal unfolding of Christianity. It took place rather in spite of those difficulties. It did not purify the church of its corruption. It did not destroy its false organization, that enormous ecclesiastical centralization that repressed everywhere the free life and growth of Christianity. But that revival of learning was in direct antagonism to the policy and tendencies of Rome. It foreboded a great conflict. It cleared the way for the Reformation. It furnished men with the intellectual armor and discipline necessary for the coming contest. Above all, it nourished the spirit of freedom. The great Universities of Paris and Oxford, born not of Rome, but of the freer, purer Christianity of the North, could not be made to submit themselves entirely to the great ecclesiastical power that sought to control them. They boldly nurtured the spirit of reform. They often proclaimed truths and principles, and defended them in open debate, which were in direct opposition to the doctrines of Papacy. They were a great torment to tyrannical popes and cardinals. They were the avowed exponents of the independent spirit which quite generally prevailed in the North. Connected with Universities were most of the men who led the way in resisting the tyranny of Rome. Thus, in the middle of the thirteenth century, a learned divine in the University of Paris, William of Amour, boldly defended the ancient freedom of the University, now against the attack of the monks, and now against the dicta of the Pope. Half a century later, we find the chancellor of the University, the renowned and learned Gerson, standing forth as the champion of ecclesiastical councils, boldly defending their authority as superior to that of the Pope. Greater and more daring reformers still were Wickliffe at the University of Oxford, and Huss at the University of Prague. The intensest intellectual life, and the highest scholarship of that age, were found in immediate connection with the freest, purest piety.

Again, the great educational movements, and the general awakening of the human mind, resulting from the *Protestant Reformation*, mark a yet higher stage of the mighty development which we are tracing. It is a fine illustration of the organic connection between Christianity and learning, that that tide of spiritual life which, beginning here and there with individual men, and rising higher and extending wider in

Europe for two hundred years, at last brought on the Reformation, was accompanied all along its course with intense intellectual activity. Men of great learning, as well as of great piety, such as Robert Grosshead, and Roger Bacon, and Richard Armacanus, prepared the way for Wickliffe and Huss. And Wickliffe and Huss, men of the highest scholarship and intellectual power, prepared the way for Luther, and Zwingle, and Calvin, and Cranmer, and Knox. That great wave of spiritual life, that, rolling through several centuries, at last broke amidst the surge and thunder of the Reformation, all along its passage bore high upon its crest men unsurpassed in their times as scholars and thinkers; men especially of terrible power in intellectual combat, before whose steel in the tournament of debate no man living could stand. The Word and the Spirit, thus acting upon individual men through successive generations, in spite of all the difficulties encountered in those ages, at last developed an intellectual power in the world which all the might of Rome could not match. Thus the crisis was brought on, and the Reformation began.

The Reformation itself was a great revival of Christianity. We should, therefore, naturally expect, if the view I am advocating is correct, that it would be immediately followed by correspondingly great intellectual movements. And this is what actually took place. The reformers began at once to busy themselves about the education of the people. Luther recommended the establishment of libraries in every town. In 1528, he and Melancthon drew up a plan of studies for common schools, which was followed in Germany until the beginning of the seventeenth century. The present gymnasia in Germany, answering to our colleges, had their origin in the Reformation. Zwingle and Calvin were likewise zealous promoters of learning. The latter was himself a great teacher, and at one time gave instruction to a thousand students. He also "caused the erection of a splendid edifice for the gymnasium of Geneva, to which eight distinguished professors of Hebrew, Greek, Philosophy, and Theology were invited." In France the Protestants established thirty-two colleges, every province in the kingdom, with a single exception, being supplied with one or more; and also at least one parochial school was established in connection with every church in the land.

In England, likewise, great zeal was awakened in behalf of education, and an immense amount of funds was contributed for the endowment of schools, and for other educational purposes. Oxford and Cambridge were reformed; and although they suffered at first, from the revolutionary process, yet, in the end, were greatly benefited. And the great schools of Eton, and Rugby, and Harrow were begun. In Scotland, also, the Reformation produced similar results. A parochial system of education was established through the efforts of John Knox and his associates, "who determined that every parish in the kingdom should be supplied with a school sufficient for the whole population, as well as with a church for divine worship." And under the same influence the University of Edinburgh was founded.*

But these distinctively educational movements, which have done so much for the intellectual elevation of modern Europe, and of a large portion of the world beyond Europe, do not by any means exhaust the intellectual benefits of the Reformation. That great revival of Christianity created in Germany a language and literature destined to exert a world-wide and lasting influence. The Bible translated by Luther, became the standard of German prose. The writings of Calvin disclosed the resources of the French language, and made it, as has been well said, "a powerful, polemical tongue." The English version of the Bible performed a similar work for the English language and culture, and the English literature rose at once to the height of its Elizabethan splendor. The arts and sciences advanced with rapid strides. Invention fol-

* "With the Reformation," says Mr. Morell, "a new era commenced in the educational history of Europe. * * * Hitherto men had been quietly led by authority; now they were to be guided by their own convictions; and consequently it was a matter of supreme moment that those convictions should be rightly and wisely formed. With the spread of the Reformation, accordingly, the fact dawned upon the mind, that the universal exercise of private judgment must be accompanied by the universal education of those who were to employ it. Without this, it was seen that the work of reformation would be wholly incomplete; for of what use would be the appeal to individual convictions, so long as the people were too benighted to have any? Of what avail the right of private judgment, so long as the masses of mind around them had no judgment at all? With the Reformation then, *the imperative necessity of educating the whole mass of society, from the highest to the lowest, first grew into a clear conviction.* All the great efforts for accomplishing that end date their origin from this period."

lowed invention, and discovery, discovery, in quick succession. Great intellectual energy every where pervaded the masses of the people. Never before was there such a general and thorough awakening of the human mind. And Europe is indebted to-day, for her countless institutions of learning, for her splendid literatures, her art and science, her high civilization, and all her intellectual elevation in the world, proximately to the Reformation, but really to that comparatively pure and free Christianity of which the Reformation was only a revival.

From this hasty glance at the intellectual developments of Christianity in modern Europe, I pass at once to the similar developments of it in our own country. Here it found itself again in circumstances, in many respects, entirely new. In the first centuries, Christianity unfolded itself in the midst of the highest Pagan civilization of the world. In the second great period of its history, it took barbarian nations as wild and heathenish, probably, as any that ever existed, and with such material began to work; and after centuries of slow progress, the lofty civilization of Protestant Europe is the splendid result. But in this country Christianity took neither civilized Pagans, nor wild barbarians, but a Christian people at the start. It took an enlightened Christian nation in its germ. Nay, it wrought out the germ itself, in the great Protestant Reformation in Europe, and transplanted it to these shores, where it might unfold itself more freely and naturally, than it ever could amidst the tyrannies, civil and ecclesiastical, of the Old World; thus connecting, organically, its work *here,* with that reaching back through all the Christian centuries in the Old World. Christianity, therefore, here really entered upon a distinct period of its development. And thus we come to the historical position of our own educational system and institutions. They are the last, in the order of nature, which Christianity has yet produced. They are the result of a great historic process,—a process which has been growing mightier and grander through all the Christian era. It reached one culmination, in the fourth and fifth centuries, in the East; and another and a higher, in the great revival of learning, and the subsequent intellectual splendor accompanying and following the Reformation, in Europe. And now here, in the yet farther

and freer West, we have, in the comparatively short space of about two hundred years, another educational unfolding of Christianity, which we cannot believe is unworthy of its historical position. It is certainly of vast proportions and of vast power. Its bare statistics would fill a volume ; and in many particulars, it already surpasses all previous similar results of Christianity.

It will answer my present purpose to notice, briefly, three characteristics of this great educational development.

And first, Christianity, in this last unfolding of itself, has been surpassingly prolific in institutions of learning, one leading characteristic of which is, that they are *free.* They bend the knee to no earthly power. They exist in cringing subserviency to no despotism, civil or ecclesiastical. Our theological seminaries, our colleges and common schools, have sprung spontaneously from the Christianity of the people, and thus far they have been left to be freely controlled by the organic power from which they sprang. Their growth is therefore natural, free. Never before were institutions of learning so entirely in the hands of the people. In some of the States, the civil government, it is true, seems to take the initiative in promoting education, inasmuch as it requires, by law, schools of a certain kind and length to be kept in every neighborhood. It also charters our higher institutions of learning. But in this country the people make the government, and therefore *they* virtually originate and control the whole system of education. The educational institutions of Prussia, of world-wide reputation, are not free ; they are in the hands of the government. The government educates the people for itself, in a great degree ; not so much for their good and the good of the world. The whole system is too mechanical. Its very source is artificial. And this is one of the chief reasons why Prussia, with her massive system of education and her great learning, has yet never taken any leading part in the enterprise and civilization of the world. Our educational institutions, on the other hand, springing, not from the government, but from the Christianity that lives and throbs in the hearts of the people, are more vital and organic. They are more normal, and therefore must be better. They are already seen to be more powerful in their influence upon individual

and national character, and to be more closely connected with the enterprise and general progress of the age, than are the governmental systems of education in Europe. Should pure Christianity ever die in our country, (which may God forbid,) some artificial source of education might take its place, and would for a time, perhaps, be better than none. But educational institutions, with such an origin, will always be found to be strangely wanting in vitality, and comparatively powerless in energizing and elevating humanity.

Again, Christianity in our country, unfolding itself more naturally and freely than ever before on so large a scale, has given us institutions of learning in unusual harmony with all other institutions around them, civil and religious. There is a beautiful interdependence among them, constituting a perfect unity, as if they all came from the same source, and were fashioned by the same power. Our form of popular government would not long exist without a system of popular education; and *our* system of popular education would have but a brief continuance without a popular government. The comparatively free church politics which predominate in our country, for their successful working, demand an *intelligent* piety in laymen, and *intelligent* piety in laymen will almost invariably demand a comparatively free church polity. The whole circle of our eleemosynary institutions can thrive only as there is knowledge enough among the people to appreciate their necessity and worth; and the general knowledge of the people is greatly augmented by the appeals which our charitable institutions, almost limitless in kind and number, are constantly making to their intelligence. But *why* this mutual dependence, and this harmony among all our institutions, civil, religious, charitable, and educational? The explanation is to be found in the fact that they all come from the same source. In our country, Christianity took a Christian nation in its germ, and freely, comparatively speaking, developed all its institutions. Hence their harmony; hence the perfect system which they all together constitute, each dependent upon all, and yet all exulting in their individual freedom. Institutions of learning here are among their own kindred. They are at home. Never before have they enjoyed such congenial, helpful family connections. Hence their growth is natural and vigorous. And

in this we have one fine illustration of their superiority, as compared with similar institutions in former ages. In this respect, as in others, they are not only the last, but the ripest and fairest fruit of the kind which Christianity has yet borne.

Again, Christianity, in this latest stage of its growth, has given us institutions of learning, one leading characteristic of which is, their interdependence, and their completeness as a system. In some ages and countries universities have comprised nearly all the educational facilities offered to the people. But Christianity, in its free action, furnishes ample provisions for popular education. Recently, many have zealously advocated the claims of common schools, but spoken comparatively in disparagement of higher institutions of learning. The college, especially, they have regarded as a kind of needless appendage to our educational system. But Christianity is wiser. In its free working, it has always given, as soon as any other institution, *the college*, or something equivalent. It does not, as some suppose, develop first the primary school as a mere aid to parental instruction; and then the grammar school out of the primary school; and next, the academy out of the grammar school; and finally, the college and professional school out of the academy. It develops them all together. He who advocates a fragment of this system, to the disparagement of the rest, belongs to the ninth, not to the nineteenth century. The college is as necessary to the primary schools, as the primary schools are to the college.

Christ himself gave the type or pattern, which Christianity, in its free and natural unfolding, has ever since followed. As soon as he began to instruct the *people*, he founded the *College* of the Apostles, as a means of supplying well-trained teachers. And in the age immediately succeeding that of Christ and the Apostles, great seats of learning, as those of Alexandria, and Antioch, and Edessa, seem to have sprung up as early as the subordinate schools designed for children and youth. Patricius, also, in Ireland, established, as soon as any, schools of the highest rank, in order that he might furnish accomplished teachers to instruct the people. And twelve centuries later, on these far-off shores of New England, we find Christianity developing itself by the same law. Only eighteen years after the landing of the Plymouth colony, and only eight

years after the landing of the Massachusetts Bay colony, Harvard College was founded. And in our own day, far away to the West, as fast as new Territories and States are formed, new colleges spring up. Some lament this rapid multiplication of higher institutions of learning; but history teaches us that it is inevitable, as surely as we give free play to a pure Christianity. It is thought by many that our colleges, because they are so numerous, are small and feeble, and suffer exceedingly in comparison with the great and richly endowed universities of Europe. But the universities of Europe are, some of them, nine or ten centuries old. Our oldest university, on the other hand, has not yet reached its two hundred and twenty-fifth year. Yale is only a little more than a century and a half old. Brown and Dartmouth have not yet celebrated their centennials. Williams College is only sixty-seven years old, and Amherst only thirty-nine. And all the colleges in our western States are in their early infancy. The Universities of Paris and Oxford, now so mighty in their vast endowments, and encircled with such a mystic antiquarian glory, what were they, when they were no older than our colleges? They were so insignificant, that it is now impossible to trace that period of their history. The feeblest of our collegiate institutions cannot suffer in the comparison. And moreover, when the Universities of Paris and Oxford were only a hundred or two years old, they two were the only universities in all Europe, while we have, to-day, at least one hundred and twenty-five colleges, more than a hundred of which have been founded within the last three-quarters of a century.

But take the Universities of Paris and Oxford, even in that period of their great prosperity, the first half of the thirteenth century, when thirty thousand students crowded the halls of each; we find that they comprised, at that time, nearly all the educational facilities of their respective countries. "Boys, and even children," we are told, were numbered among the thirty thousand students of Oxford. They were placed in this great school, doubtless, because there was such a poverty of subordinate or common schools at that time in England. And the educational interests of France, beyond the great seat of learning in her metropolis, were also in a most deplorable condition. To institute, therefore, a fair comparison between those seats

of learning at that period, and the corresponding educational facilities of our country at the present time, we must bring forward, not one of our young colleges, with its two or three hundred students, but all our colleges, and all our schools and academies, and then we shall have nearly four millions of students to place by the side of the thirty thousand of Oxford or Paris. It is by such a comparison that we perceive the true and enormous advance which the educational developments of Christianity have made in this last period of the long history we have traced. We see where we are;—to what we have attained. The great number of our educational institutions; their even distribution over the country; the spontaneousness and rapidity with which they every where spring up, all kinds at once; the common school, in all its grades; the college; and the professional school,—constituting a complete system in every small section of the country,—are features which we look in vain for in any previous period of history. This educational development, so widely and evenly diffused over the country, is not demonstrative. It makes but little noise in the world. The mightiest forces always work the most silently. There is no centralization of its power, and therefore it makes no great show. It has more of the quiet, free air of Galilee about it, than of the pride and pomp of Jerusalem; more of the wild beauty of the hills of Ireland, in the days of Patricius, than of the artificial splendor of Rome. But in this is the hiding of its power. In the stillness and security of Galilee, in hidden and quiet retreats in the north of Europe, Christianity, in earlier ages, unfolded beautifully, mightily, in the direction of education and learning. So in later times, far away from the powers and tyrannies of the Old World, her vast but uncongenial civil and ecclesiastical centralizations, on the wild shores, and in the free air of this distant and unappropriated country, Christianity has begun again to unfold itself in the same direction, freely, naturally, but on a far larger scale, and more rapidly and mightily than ever before.

But this process has but just begun here. Is it to continue? Is it now to go on until it reaches *here*, the promised millennial culmination? Or is it to be arrested, turned back, and Christianity left to reproduce it, on a still larger scale, and with more freedom and power, in yet some other land and clime? This

is the great question;—a question which it is the lofty mission of this Benevolent Society to aid in solving. If the churches, under the stimulus of Christian faith and love, shall continue to create and sustain colleges; if a free and living Christianity shall be *permitted* to pervade our institutions of learning, and to control them according to her own laws; if the mother shall be allowed to nourish her own offspring; if the Bible, and revivals of religion, and Christian teachers animated with the lofty purpose of educating men for God and eternity, shall continue to be found, in our schools and colleges; then the promised millennial triumph will come *here*. Not otherwise.

I go up and down the great aisles of history, and every where I find the highest intellectual life springing fresh from the highest spiritual life; and that wherever spiritual life dies, intellectual life dies with it. The Greek and Roman culture quickly outgrew the false polytheistic religions out of which it sprang, then culminated, then perished. The Mohammedan religion furnished a brief stimulus to the intellectual life of the followers of the Prophet. But that religion was false, soon began to die, and the Arabic culture perished with it. But Christianity never dies. It leaves one place only to plant itself and grow with more vigor in another. Impeded, and crushed, and seemingly annihilated in one clime or age, it bursts forth in other climes, or ages, with fresher life, on a larger scale, and with more might and majesty than before. But all up and down its great history, whenever the intellectual culture and the institutions of learning which it has evolved, have, in any way, become dissevered from it, they have either utterly perished, or have become dead and barren, like limbs dissevered from the tree that bore them. Thus perished those great seats of learning that, in the first centuries, flourished in Africa and in the East. Thus perished the universities of Spain, and the monastic and cathedral schools of the Middle Ages. And, to-day, much of the culture of Europe, and many of her institutions of learning, languish from the same cause. How long the art of Italy, the science of France, and the learning of Germany would go on from the mere momentum which they have already received, if they should become entirely dissevered from the Christianity out of which they grew, it is impossible to tell. But not long. The

atheism of the French Revolution destroyed, in two or three years, for the time being, all the schools of France. The rationalistic infidelity which reached its culminating point, a few years since, in Germany, had already emptied her churches, and in a few years more would have emptied her universities. It is affirmed by the highest authority, that the University of Oxford, with all her wealth and glory, is to-day, in most of her leading departments, not equal to a third-rate school; and that simply because of the semi-Papal or Puseyite influence that controls her.

And now, here, in our own country, where Christianity has put forth her last, freest, best educational development, we have only to cut the branch from the tree, to see it wither and die. Begin to separate, as much as possible, our institutions of learning from all the influences of a free and vital Christianity; take the Bible from our schools; put a stop to revivals in our colleges; allow no teachers of earnest, evangelical, working piety to teach in any of our schools or seminaries; away with the annual day of fasting and prayer for colleges; disband this noble Society, instituted for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education in the rising Empire of the West; cut, one after another, all the threads of organic, spiritual influence which now bind our whole educational system to the freest, purest Christianity that pulsates in the land;—do this, and you shall see all our institutions of learning, from the primary school to the university, all this beautiful verdure and bloom of Christianity, perish, as the tender leaf and flowers perish, when you have plucked them from the stem that bore them.

I have seen, in the primeval forests of northern New England, a huge oak, towering up in its native majesty, the slow growth of centuries. Around its ponderous trunk, here and there, could be detected *scars*, where once thrifty limbs shot out, which, however, in some way, lost their vital connection with the tree, then died, dropped off, and perished forever. Farther up were limbs, dry and dead, unsightly things, still holding their place on the tree, but destined soon to fall, and rot, as others had done before them. But high up above all these were great branches, more mighty than the tree had ever borne before, stretching far away to the skies, and waving their living green in proud triumph over all the forest.

So Christianity in the world is the majestic growth of centuries. Churches, institutions of learning, all external organizations which grow out of it, when they lose their vital connection with it, sooner or later perish. Many branches of this tree, in past ages, have, in one way and another, become dissevered from it, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace of their existence. Others, dead or dying, still hold their place and name ; but they are only waiting the same doom. Their very memory shall rot. But high above all these, this tree has put forth, in these last times, great branches, which are still waving in proud triumph their living verdure and bloom over the nations. These, too, may perish. God only knows. They certainly will, unless some lessons are learned from the great teachings of the past. But if they do perish, then yet other branches, fairer and of more majestic proportions, shall put forth from this same wondrous tree, and they shall canopy the world, and all nations shall repose beneath them, amidst the millennial blessings of purity, peace, freedom, and knowledge.

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